

ABSTRACT OF DISCLOSURE

A bipolar electrode for use with an electrosurgical handpiece, the electrode being configured for use in MIS and other electrosurgical procedures, primarily for endoscopic spinal surgery. The active electrodes use the bipolar principle and are configured to provide more controlled distribution of the electrosurgical currents to the tissue to be modulated. In one embodiment, the bipolar electrodes are formed along a side portion of a longitudinally-extendable tube, each connected to a terminal of the bipolar source. As a result of the bipolar action, the electrosurgical discharge occurs primarily between the adjacent edges of the side-by-side electrodes, which can be described as side-firing or side-emitting bipolar electrodes. A main advantage is that it provides the surgeon with additional control over where exactly the effects of the electrosurgical currents will be obtained. Preferably, the electrodes are mounted on an extendable tube of memory plastic that will assume a desired curved shape when extended to provide more freedom for location of the electrodes by the surgeon to treat tissue during a surgical procedure.

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